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NEHEMIAH,  
OR,  
THE EXCELLENT  
GOVERNOR.

BEING  
A Discourse delivered at the Ca-  
thedral of the Holy TRINITY,  
*Dublin, Aug. 1669.*

Before the Right Honourable  
THOMAS Earle of OSSORY  
Then Lord Deputy of Ireland.

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By  
*J. P. D. D.* and Dean of the said Church.

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Imprimatur

at the P. M. W. S. Vicecan.

N. O. X. 10. the Holy Trinity.

Jan. 2. 16<sup>th</sup>

Before the Right Honourable



Then Lord Deputy of Ireland.

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J. P. D. D. and Dean of the said Church.

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TO  
THE RIGHT HONOVABLE,  
AND TRULY NOBLE  
THOMAS Earle of OSSORY,  
Iare Lord Deputy of Ireland, and eldest  
Son to the Illustrious Prince  
JAMES Duke of ORMOND  
His Grace &c.

My Lord,



*His Sermon which not  
long since had the honour  
of Your Lordship's eare,  
I have now made bold to  
present more publickly to Your Lord-  
ship's eye, being ambitious to let the  
world see that those great obligations  
of Duty and Honour which the Author  
owes Your Lordship and illustrious Fa-  
A 2 milie,*

The Epistle DEDICATORY.

*milie, are a part of my debt also, not only as related to Him, and a Father before Him, eminent by your Favours, but also in the honour of being knowne to your Lordship and most Noble Family, and also by many Favours particularly obliged to subscribe my selfe with all gratitude and zeale,*

*My Lord,*

*Your Lordship's*

Most Humble, and

Devoted servant

B.P.



NEHEMIAH C.13. V.14.

*Remember me O God concerning this,  
and wipe not out the good deeds which  
I have done for the house of my God  
and the offices thereof.*

**I**N the midst of Judgment God  
usually remembers Mercy, and  
a Nation once chosen by *Him*,  
may in its lowest ebb (if there be  
any hopes of amendment) find a relerve  
of kindnesse.

Though the *Israelites* (for their Rebellion  
and impenitency) be overwhelmed  
by all the miseries of War at home, and oft  
times carried Captive to a strange land a-  
broad;

*The Jewes in  
their lowest e-  
state are owned  
by God, who rai-  
seth some of  
their own Na-  
tion still to be in  
favour with the  
Conqueror.*

broad; yet *God* doth not utterly forget them in their bondage, *he* is pleased still to raise up some of their owne Nation to be in favour with the Conquerours: whose endeavours doe much lighten (though not wholly take off) their Chaines.

*Daniel with  
Nebucadnezar.*

Thus whilst *that* enthralled Nation was groaneing under *Nebucadnezar*, a wise *Daniel* is promoted, who by his interest in that great King, in part dries up their teares.

*Cyrus always  
loved them.*

*Ezra 1. 2.*

When in the time of *Assuerus* the subtilty of *Haman* brought them neare their last gaspe, a fatall decree being sent out, for their totall massacre, *God* then advances *Mordecai* and *Hesier*, whose diligence recalls that hasty sentence, and not onely saves the distressed Jewes from butchery, but hangs the author of it upon that gibbet which he prepared for another. Thus providence instilled into *Cyrus* (*that great Prince*) a very particular kindness unto the whole Nation; who openly acknowledges, *The Lord God of heaven hath charged me to build him an house at Ierusalem.* Thus

(3)

Thus as that Captive people were in the time of *Artaxerxes* weeping by the waters of *Babylon*, whilst their Harps were hung upon the melancholy willowes, and a deluge made in that river by their owne tears, *God* is then pleased to pity their heaviness, and to give them hopes of *one song more in Sion*, by the promotion of a generous *Nehemiah* into great favour with that Prince, whose noble temper makes use of his interest for the publique advantage of his owne Nation.

*Nehemiah with Artaxerxes.*

For whilst *Nehemiah* (as we find it recorded) is upon his attendance at Court, he receives *sad newes* from *Ierusalem*; the little scattered remnant there was preyed upon by insulting enemies, the wall broken downe, and the gates burnt up. This strikes deepe into the *publick spirit* of *Nehemiah*, and drownes him in mourning and tears, and the trouble of his hart became visible in the disorders of his countenance, whilst he attends as a *Cup-bearer*, the King perceives that unusuall sadness, and when (upon

*His publique spirit.*  
*Chapt. 1.*

on

(4)

His Commission  
to be Governour  
over Judea  
chap. 2.

on strict inquiry ) he knowes the reason of it from himselfe, he thinks fitt to send him with a *Commission* as his *Lieutenant* to *govern* that people with whom he was best acquainted, and for whom he had soe tender a respect, The King onely desires him not to stay long away, for he cannot be much without him, he loves his person and stands in need of his advice.

*Nehemiah's Commission* is no sooner sealed but he begins his Journey, and being arrived at *Ferusalem* he vigorously acts in that Sphere he was placed in; and notwithstanding all attempts of Enemies abroad, and the disorders of *intangled* interests at home, he governes like *himselfe* as a prudent unbiassed *Deputy*, and a true Patriot of the reall concernes of his Country: and at length having much settled that distracted Land, his *Master* cannot any longer be without his company, and therefore having finished all that man could perform, he is now upon the close of his *Government*, and in my Text we find him upon his knees in a modest reflection

flexion upon what he had done, and a passionate *entreaty* for somewhat which he desired in the words I have read unto you His Prayer upon the close of his Government.  
 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the House of my God, and for the Offices thereof.

Thus you may see my Text is the prayer of a chief Governor or Deputy under the great King Artaxerxes, over the Land of Judea, wherein we may find these particulars: 1. somewhat particularly mentioned and represented by Nehemiah, 2. the Petitions requested from God.

1. That which is mentioned is his good Deeds, which he performed in his Government; and these are interweaved with all the actions of his Authority, and may be reduced unto these two heads. 1. Acts of Justice, and love to the whole Nation in the settlement of their Civil Rights. 2. His service to the Church, to the house of God, and to the offices thereof: the one bespeaks his Piety to God, the other his Justice and Charity



to man; the first contains his *diligence* in Settling their *temporal Interests*, and the last comprehends his industrious establishment of *God's worship and Religion*.

His good deeds  
to the whole Na-  
tion.

As for the first, his *Acts of Kindnesse* to the whole Nation, these may be viewed in these following particulars.

1. In accepting  
of the Govern-  
ment in a dan-  
gerous time.

1. His taking the Government upon him in *troublesome, dangerous, & calamitous times*; the afflictions of *Jerusalem* were heavy, and the whole Nation lay in *Poverty* and *Contempt*, their *Purses* as well as their *Spirits* so much exhausted, as that *Nehemiah* could not expect to better his fortune, or improve himself; he knows the whole Province is in a flame, the gates of the holy City burnt, and the wall of it in the dust; the neighbouring people testify their enmity by their continual Rapine and Incursions, dead bodies (as *Iosephus* tells us) strewed the High ways, and the whole Nation tired, very poor and low. Though all things be thus disheartening and sad, yet *Nehemiah* refuses not to stand in the gap, very generously endeavours



vours the cure of this distemper, and thereby proclaimes, that *he* prefers their common good before his own private ease, which as it was an act of generosity in it self, so it was hugely acceptable to that low distracted people. Thus it is some satisfaction not utterly to be forsaken, and they call for thanks who own our difficulties by participating in them, to pull us out; they deserve our acknowledgments, who venture themselves to save us from sinking. The Senate of Rome met *Terentius Varro* (though unsuccessful in his fight with *Hannibal* at *Canna*) with much honour, meerly *quia de Republica non desperasset*, he despaired not of a more happy day: when the Sea smiles, it is not much valor or toile to take up the *Helm*, but for a man voluntarily to engage in a Storme when he might be set safe at land, to labour at the *Helm* when his neighbour's Ship springs a leak, to adventure into the mouth of a *Canon* to save his friend, when onely his own courage not any *Imposal* call'd him thither, this speaks some-

what generous and handsome. Thus good *Nehemiah* thinks it worthy of himself to take the *Helm* when *Judea* was almost shipwrackt, whereby he gives the first check to those Enemies who thought to swallow up all, and who (it seems) were exceedingly troubled that any should appear to seek the welfare of that perishing Nation.

Chap. 2. 10.

2. His vigorous prosecution of the publick interest before his private Concerns.

2. *Nehemiah's* second Act of Justice and love to his people appears, in his vigorous prosecution of the publick work, before any advantage of his own private Concerns, (though these were many and great) but in the repairs of *Ierusalem*, and in all he evidenceth all the great Qualifications of a Commander and Minister of State.

in herein appeared

1. His wisdom.

As first his wisdom, whereby he wrought the people to his own mind; and by prudent orders set many hands with much discipline to work: these animated by the example as well as the command of their General, chearfully did perform their several tasks, they finisht the Wall and the Bulwarks without any noise or confusion.

Chap. 3.

2. His

(9)

2. His watchfulnesse and unwearied Vigilance, in that though surrounded with Enemies of all sorts, the Samaritans, the Arabians, and the Amorites, who strongly oppose that defence, yet his watchful Eye cuts off all attempts, and that 1. By gaining intelligence of their Cabinet Counsels, 2. By keeping a strict Watch and well disciplin'd Guard, and in his own person he assists in the Repairs: 3. By discovering the falseness of pretended friends; for some of his own party of the Nobles, being related to the Enemy by marriage and interest, many private Letters pass betwixt them; these he diligently intercepts, and dissipates their confederacies against him.

3. His Courage;  
Chap. 4. 3.

3. He gave upon all occasions good testimonies of much Courage and resolution, and that mixed with a sweet affable pious temper; whilst the Enemy scoffs he prays, and when by rumors of invasions and hired Prophecies they endeavour to terrify him, he scorns their fears, and very undauntedly goes on. When they find that terrors cannot prevail, they

Chap. 6. 2.

they change their note, and sliely invite him to a personal conference, to a cessation of Arms, the better to surprize him, and effect their designs, *let us meet, said Sanballat, in some one of the villages of the plains, but he desires to be excused; they thought (said the good Nehemiah) to do me amischief:* thus no pre-  
tence could hinder his resolution, his publick management of Affairs.

His Acts of  
kindness appears  
in several other  
particulars

as  
In easing the  
poor, and

Dispatching of  
Petitions.

3. Nehemiah's acts of Justice and Love to the whole Nation appears in his sweet affable tendernes in all the lesser Concerns of that afflicted people: as 1. in dispatch of Petitioners, 2. in easing the poor from those pressures which lay too hard upon them. In unsettled calamitous times the meanest usually suffer most, the great fish commonly breaks through whilst the lesser are swallowed up; this good Nehemiah endeavours to remedy by abating their usury and exactions, by sweetning the Masters towards their servants, and in openly rebuking the great men he brought matters to a more tolerable moderation.

Whereas

Whereas *Nebemiah* might have expected a general assistance in defraying those publick expences, and so might have been chargeable to the people as some Governours before him were, he desires from them no such Contribution, he hath a large revenue of his own, and he makes a noble use of it, His charity and open Hospitality. he maintains his family much upon his own charge, and in case he had an allowance from his Master, that will not serve, he spares not his own Estate, and keeps an open free Table, and he himself assures us, Chap. 5. 17. That an hundred and fifty Jews were at my Table, besides those that came unto us from among the Heathen that were about us. The Rulers of the Priests and of the people were within, and the poor distressed, who were stript and forced into the City by the cruelty of enemies abroad, these all find a kind reception and comfortable relief from him.

Thus you see the first of *Nebemiah's* good deeds, his Acts of Justice, and love to the whole Nation, manifested 1. In his taking upon him the government in an hazardous time: 2. In

a generous and vigorous prosecution of the publick good before his own private concerns: wherein he evidenceth

1. *Wisdom and Prudence.* 2. *Vigilance and Care.* 3. *Courage and Resolution*, besides his many other Acts of mercy and kindness in speedy easing the people, in moderating Taxes, relieving the Poor, in keeping an open Hospitality, and spending his own fair Revenue.

Three inferences.

And from all this I may infer these following Observations.

1. *That a people once owned by God may be driven to great exigencies by want and disorder at home, by the confederacies and violence of enemies abroad.*

2. *That a Nation thus in Straights cannot be blest with a greater visible mercy, than with a Governour of a noble true generous Spirit.* Twas *Israel's* happinesse to have such as *Moses* to deliver them from the slavery of *Egypt*, and such as *Ioshua* to conduct them in the hardships of the wilderness, and such as *David* to feed them in a green pasture, and

and such as *Nehemiah* to build up a ruinous *Jerusalem*, to settle that broken Nation, and therefore

3. It is certain that as an excellent Magistrate is a great blessing, so the not being sensible of that mercy, is a great sin. The grumbling at *David*, and repining against *Moses*, and complaining against *Joshua*, a not being content with *Manna*, and the speaking ill of those who spend themselves for us, is a sin of a deep dye, and doth not usually go unpunished.

I have now done with the first part of *Nehemiah's* good deeds, his Acts of justice and kindnesse to the whole Nation, in the settlement of their civil Rights. I come now to the second, his services to the Church, and the Offices thereof. He confines not himself to Acts of Civility and Tendernesse to the people, he knows that something is to be done for God as well as Man, and that whatever is performed for his service is the readiest way to advance their reputation abroad, as well as their prosperity and peace

*The second part  
of Nehemiah's  
good deeds for  
the Church.*



at home. He thinks himself obliged to provide for the *welfare* of their *Souls* as well as of their *Estates*, and therefore this prudent Deputy carefully sets himself to the *reestablishment* of that *Religion* which was banisht long from *Ierusalem*, and to *discountenance* and weed out those *tares* and *corruptions* which *liberty* and *confusions* had brought in. This he performs with *zeal*, and particularly mentions in my Text, the *good deeds* that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

These I shall reduce to the following particulars.

1. In cleansing  
the Temple.

Chap. 13. v. 8.

1. He took care for the *cleansing* and *adorning* God's house, and for the *unmingled purity* of its *Offices*. In his absence from *Ferusalem* (being several times sent for to the King) *Tobiab* had intruded into the *Courts* of the Temple, and placed his *own household-stuff* in those *chambers* which were appropriated to a more *holy use* for the vessels of the Lord; this good *Nehemiah* is much displeased at, and upon his return tells us, *it grieved me sore,*



fore, therefore I cast forth all the household-stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber, and thither brought again the vessels of the house of the Lord, with the meat-offerings and Frankincense.

2. Intruders into the Priesthood are deposed, and made incapable of that service; <sup>2. In deposing intruders into the Priesthood: chap. 7. 64.</sup> they who could not make out their legal qualification and descent, were, as polluted, put from the Priesthood.

3. Nehemiah (being happy in careful <sup>3. In encouraging the Rulers & Priests in exposition of the Law.</sup> prudent Governours of the Church, he with their help) sets up a diligent preaching and exposition of the Law. Painful Ezra with his brethren are not idle, they counsel and instruct the people, and convince them of their Errors, in a Language they understood; he reads and they are attentive, he expounds the difficulties and they modestly receive his exposition, he makes a conveniency for audience a Pulpit of Wood, and they hang upon the Priests lips which are to preserve knowledge. The people do not pretend to be teachers themselves, or that

C 2                      they

they know enough already, but they are most  
 devoutly attentive, and promise all obedience  
 to what they hear.

4. In prescribing a Conformity in the matter and manner of their worship.

Chap. 8. 6.

4. To keep off Confusion and new  
 fancies he obliges them to a Conformity in  
 their worship of God; as to the matter, he pre-  
 scribes all the Commands of Moses without  
 partiality to be punctually obeyed by all; as  
 to the manner, they hearken to it unanimously,  
 in one general posture, reverently and de-  
 cently, he opens the Book and they stand up,  
 he praises God and they openly proclaim Amen,  
 Amen; they lift up their hands in sign of their  
 consent, they bow their heads and worship  
 the Lord with their faces to the ground in  
 token of their humility.

5. In proclaiming a Fast.  
 Chap. 9.

5. To work the people to a true Sense of  
 their former miscarriages, and God's unex-  
 pected mercies, he proclaims a solemn Fast, and  
 enjoins an open confession of sin.

6. In sanctifying the Sabbath.

6. He rectifies the abuse of the Sabbath,  
 and represses the prophaneſſe of those who  
 made no distinction of days.

7. Whereas the Dues of the Priests were  
 wrested

wrested from them, and the Revenues of the Church swallowed up by the great invaders of its Patrimony, we find pious Nehemiah vigorously acting in the restoration of them; he liberally contributes towards their maintenance himself, and builds houses for the Prophets, and contends with those Nobles who thought it no robbery to keep what they can, he compels them to be just, and to pay their Tithes, and takes care that they shall not depend upon the Arbitrary benevolence of the people.

7. In restoring  
their Patrimony  
to the Church.  
Chap. 13. 10.

These were some of the many good deeds of this noble Lieutenant in his service both to the Nation and the Church; in whom an excellent Magistrate may find a pattern for himself. And truly Nehemiah's good deeds were of so noble and diffusive an influence, as that some of the Antients have thought him a type of our blessed Saviour Christ, which though uncertain whether intended by God's Spirit, yet it is most infallibly true, that our Saviour did spiritually and substantially perform that, which

Nehemiah wrote;  
that a type of  
Christ?

this

this Governour did outwardly effect: He like *Nehemiah* came to his own in a time of extremity and need, to comfort the broken-hearted, and to raise up the ruins of decayed mankind. Christ built up the walls of new *Ierusalem* (his Church,) and hath appointed *Pastors* and *Governours* to feed his flock, and his Gospel to sever the Wheat from the lesse useful Chaff. He, like this good man, pull'd off the chains of the miserable, and proclaim'd liberty to the *Captives* laden with debt. Thus Christ did that spiritually, which *Nehemiah* did outwardly, and those virtues which were so bright in him, were such as Christ both requires and rewards in *Magistrates*, and *Josephus* his character of him is not yet dead, he was *ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος καὶ ἁγνός τῆς ψυχῆς* &c. A just person of a most excellent disposition, a great passionate lover of his Country.

Lib. Antiq. 11.  
c. 5.

5 Inferences.

From all these put together I gain these following particulars.

1. Chief magistrates may interpose in matters of Religion.

1. That the chief Governour hath power to rectifie the abuse of God's service, according to the

*the establisht Laws of God and his Church: he may lawfully do what Nehemiah did; it is no encroachment upon Christian liberty to determine the use of things indifferent, nor is it prejudicial to the Commands of Christ to obey the constitutions of Authority.*

2. Though the *chief Magistrate* may o<sup>2. But not u<sup>n</sup>surp the office of Priests.</sup> *versee the Priests, and cause them to execute their duties,* yet they have no power to *usurp their offices.* His being a *Magistrate* did not privilege him to exercise the *Priesthood*; that Calling is *sacred*, and requires a due *Mission* as well as *Abilities.* If *Corah* offer to take up the *Censer*, the *Earth* may open and swallow him up. If *Vzziah* (though a *King*) intrudes into the *Priests office*, *God* will meet him in the way, and as he stretches out his hands with a *Censer*, a *Leprosie* breaks out on his *Forehead*; and he who would needs offer *incense to God*, becomes *loathsome* to himself; and he who was not satisfied to come in as a *King*, is shut out as a *Leper* from approaching the *Sanctuary.*

3. That the *information of Judgment is the most*

*Information of most natural means of rectifying the disorders of our affections. The preaching of the word, and the instructing of the people, is the best way to make them sensible of their sins.*

*Confession of sin to attend upon our knowledge of it.*

4. That a due confession and acknowledgment of our guilt must attend upon the sense and knowledge of our sins: a solemn Fast is proclaimed after reading the Law.

*To oppose sacrilege an argument of a pious soul.*

5. That a restoring unto God the things that are God's, and the opposing of Sacrilege is usually an act of a pious and generous soul. This overcomes very high temptations, which many sink under: *Nebemiah* will stand in the gap and hazard a contention with any, and rebuke the Nobles, rather than connive at the robbing of God. He will honour the persons, and keep sacred the possessions dedicated to his service, and not suffer the Priesthood to be exposed to the arbitrary benevolence of the people.

*Last part of Nebemiahs request of what to be remembered.*

Thus I have done with the first part of my Text, that *Nebemiah* mentioned and represented his good deeds for the Nation and for the Church, I come now to the last

*last part, to that which he requests of God, and that is a Remembrance of these, Remember me O my God, and wipe not out &c.*

In two phrases he desires the same thing, 1. a Remembrance, 2. a not wiping out his good deeds.

The first is positive, the second negative, A twofold Remembrance. both to the same purpose, both mutually explain each other: there is a remembrance Theoretical, and there is a remembrance Practical, the first is immanent, the second transient, *that in affectu, this in effectu*; and since Nehemiah enforces this request by a not wiping out, we may conclude that his prayer to God is, that he may be effectually remembered.

Here two things offer themselves, 1. *by whom he would be remembered*, 2. *how he would have this Remembrance expressed?*

1. The Remembrancer desired is God, The Remembrancer desired God. Remember me O my God.

Though Nehemiah's Acts of kindnesse to the people be great, and his sweet behavi-

D

our



our and care had extremely obliged all, yet he makes not his addresse to *them*, he minds not *Ierusalem* of her *rebuilted wall*, nor the Rulers of their *vindicated honors*, nor the *Priests* of their *restored function* (prostituted before to the balest of the people,) he minds not the *whole Nation* of its settlement and peace, as far as their *intangled interests* would permit, he turns not to *any of these* but to his God, *Remember me O my God.*

*Most eminently,  
especially before  
Man.*

*Philip. 2.*

He turns to his God 1. *most especially* and *eminently* before man, 2. *exclusively*, he utterly *excludes* and *rejects* the remembrance of man.

1. He turns *most especially* to his God, because his *good deeds* were performed in *obedience* to him.

2. Because *they* were effected by God's *grace* and *peculiar strength*, who *worketh* in all men to will and to doe; and who *actuates Princes and Magistrates* with *Spirits* suitable to their *Stations*.

3. Because *God's glory* was the *great aime* of



of *what he did: this* the Gentiles scoff at, and from the ruins of the *City* and the neglected defilements of the *Temple*, took occasion to condemn the *God of Israel*, who once owned himself their *Protector* and their *mighty deliverer*.

4. Because *God is pleased to accept of acts of Charity and love to man as done to himself*, and therefore for these and many more reasons he most *especially* hath recourse in the first place to *God*, *Remember me O my God*.

2. He turns to *God exclusively*. Man's remembrance is not at all *desired*, he is silent of that, and onely begs *this*, because

1. *God* was not at all obliged to him, nor his *Debtor* for his *good deeds*, but man *was*, and therefore were men *Candid* and *ingenious*, and but tolerably *Just*, *Nehemiah* might have very well *expected* that they would not easily *forget* him; or if they *did*, he knew it would be their *own fault*, not *his*, and consequently the *ill* would be *theirs*

too for being so *ungrateful*; and therefore this *noble Governour* is above their flattery, and *hunts not* after their *praise*, he seeks no monument in their *remembrance*, he minded not *himself* in doing them good, nor doth he court their *applause* for what he did perform.

Second reason.

2. It is rationally probable that *Nehemiah* omits any desire of being *remembred* by man, out of a real *distrust* of ever having it *duely paid*; for if *God* be *forgotten*, man cannot very well expect to be *remembred*, and they who are too usually *unmindful* of the *daily mercies of God*, will quickly be *strangers* to the *kindnes of man*. Experience tells us, that a little trouble or hardship of a few hours, blots out the memory of mercies poured down the whole life before by *God*. If *Israel* want a little water, they will forget the wonders of *Egypt*; a little bad news, or a wanton desire of *flesh*, or a few dayes absence of *Moses*, makes them all dance after a *Calf*. Well therefore may the

the *Magistrate* distrust a remembrance of man, since man thus easily forgets his *God*. *Magistrates*, who move in an *open Sphere*, (though never so sweet and pleasing in their influence, yet) accidentally may attract some *unquiet exhalations*, and if they displease but once, that one ungrateful Action is the *only thing remembred*. And therefore as every pious prudent Christian secures to himself a more *faithful repository* for his *treasure* in *Heaven*, because he finds the *moth* and the *rust* breaks through all on *earth*, so good *Nehemiah*, because he finds men grossly ignorant, causlessly querulous, *unconstant* in their *affections*, and *ungrateful* for *kindnesse* and favours received, therefore he thinks not fit to rely upon their *memories*, nor court their *applauses*, but looks onely upon his *God*, who *faithfully records* all, whose gifts and promotions are without *repentance*, in whom there is no *variablenesse* or *shadow of Change*.

But some may question, whether this  
may

whether it be a  
ny presumption  
in Nehemiah to  
be remembered by  
God?

may not be an Act of *Presumption* for any man, who at best is bad, to present his *Good deeds* to God for a remembrance for him, in whose Eyes the Seraphims themselves are *impure*. But it is certain

1. That *Nehemiah* did no more than what many good men before him did. Thus *Obadiab* mentions his good pious service in hiding the Prophets in a Cave &c.

How far a man  
may reflect on  
his own good  
deeds?

2. He did no more than what lawfully may be done. For seeing that deeds truly good are done in Obedience to God, in faith and to his glory, they flow à Deo in Deum, and therefore cannot but cheer up the Soul, and breath into it those Comforts which attend upon a good Conscience, and add Confidence to our Addresles unto God.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

This St. Paul triumphs in, and when man is silent, God is oft pleased to shew publickly his remembrance of good Actions, done in obedience to him. If *Abraham* put a knife to his sons Throat when commanded,  
God

God openly remembers it, and promises a reward. If the people murmur against *Moses*, God himself will vindicate him, *he is faithful in all my house*; he owns *David* to be a man after his own heart, and proclaims *Iob* to be a perfect and an upright man; and he tels the Church of *Thyatira*, *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and patience*: and therefore we may safely conclude, that this kind of representment of good deeds to God, infers neither presumption in the Agent, nor merit unto iustification; for a deed may be good in its kind, yet not meritorious, and a good man may rejoice in the testimony of a good Conscience without arrogance or boasting.

To *Nehemiah* therefore, and such as he is, it may be said, Thou hast been faithful to God and thy own Master; no hazards could stagger thy principles, nor the potency of several factions lessen thy care of God's service and honour; the whole Nation hath for many years tasted of the Sweets of thy Government,

ment, and the Revenue and Persons of Priests shrouded under thy protection, and therefore however men may be affected, yet it is thy comfort that thou hast an infallible Record in heaven, who sees in secret and openly rewardeth, to him thou mayst freely call *Remember me &c.*

*Nehemiah clears him from presumption by begging to be spared. Spare me &c.*

And to all this let me adde two words more, which Nehemiah makes use of wholly to clear his words from presumption: thus v. 22. *Remember me and spare me according to the greatnesse of thy mercy.* God's sparing is an act of Providence; it is the not inflicting of that evil on a person, which God might in justice or power send down, it is sometimes exprest by not imputing, by covering sin and pardoning offences, and therefore done according to multitude of mercies.

And truly the deformity of Sin is so monstrous, and the Curses which attend upon it so hideous and many, as that to spare when punishment is deserved, to forget the sin and remember the sinner, is not a single kindness but a multitude of mercy. Thus

Thus you see *Nehemiah's request*, *Spare me O my God*, is not the Language of pride, nor the pleadings of merit; tis no Pharisaical lisp, but the groan of a Penitent, God be merciful to me a sinner.

And truly we may find that *Nehemiah*, though never so godly, hath good reason to beg for a *Spare me*, for though his good deeds as such do not deserve a reward, yet they are not as such subjects of punishment; however he hath reason to cry *Spare me*. For

1. There is an union and consociation betwixt the *Magistrate* and *People*; and we oft find that the one is punisht for the misdemeanours of the other. Because he may smart for the peoples sins.

Thus some thousands of *David's* Subjects smart for his sin of numbring the people, and an excellent *Josiah* removed for the sin of *Fudab*: God was angry with *Moses* for the peoples sake, and let *Nehemiah* be as just and as innocent as he can, yet he may suffer for the peoples corruption, and therefore in prevention of this he may cry *Spare me O my God*.

2. It



2. It is certain, that the *best of his deeds* had their mixture of *imperfection*, and therefore being conscious to his own failings he begs for *pardon and acceptance*. *Magistrates* are but *men*, and not utterly privileged from the passions of *flesh and blood*; and therefore *St. Paul* enjoyns supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all in Authority; we are obliged not onely to render *εὐχαριστίας* thanks, for the happinesse of Government, and the good it brings with it, but *δεήσεις* supplications, for the averting of Calamity from their persons, and *προσευχάς* prayers for those graces they stand in need of; and we must send up to the throne of Grace *ἐντεύξεις* intercessions, for God's pardoning unto them their sins, for his remission of their *personal* offences, as well as their *publick* failings. This well weighed would stop the censures of men, a sense of this invites *Nehemiah* to wave all thoughts of his *good deeds*, to banish any thing which exceeds an humble *Spare me*;  
he



he claims not a *Crown* for his *merit*, but petitions for a *pardon* for his *failings*, and that according to the *multitude of mercies*.

Lastly, *Nebemiah* closes up his whole Book with one word, which wholly clears his *Prayer* from *presumption*, and that is, *Remember me O my God for Good*.

1. *For good!* This is the voice 1. of *Hu-* Remember me for good.  
This voice 1. of Humility.  
*mility*, whereby he acknowledges himself to be in a *State* capable of being *made better*, though he be highly *loved* by his *Prince*, and of great authority at *Court*, and tenderly *honoured* by *Priest* and *People*, yet there is a *greater good* than all *this* which he *aims at*, and makes the *object* of his desires, and *this* he looks for *there* onely where it can be had, from his *God*, to *him* he cries, *Remember me for good*.

2. *For good!* This is the voice of *confi-* 2. Of Faith.  
*dence and trust*, it implies his *stedfast believe* that there is a *reward* laid up for *good deeds* in *general*, and that his *good services* *particularly* shall be *crowned with good*.

This *God* hath *promised*, and therefore every good man of us, as well as *Nehemiah*, may rely upon it; especially if we make *God* peculiarly *our own* by our relyance and *faith*, so as to call him justly *my God*: and if we evidence our *faith* by our good deeds to *God* and to *Man*, if every one of us in our own Spheres discharge our duties to *God*, to our *King*, and to one another, if we do all this sincerely and constantly, we may then confidently pray with good *Nehemiah*, *Lord remember me*; we may then be assured we shall not be *forgotten*, and that our humble *Spare me* will be attended with the greatest good.

*Application.*

I should now descend to *Application*, but that I am confident that most of this *Auditory* have done that in *their thoughts already*, and therefore I shall conclude all with these 2 or 3 *Queries*, which I shall leave to your own resolution.

*Three queries.*

Whether, when *we* of this *Kingdom* were like those of *Ierusalem*, at a low ebb, surrounded

rounded with *stormes* and unexpected tempests, when *enemies* prest us *without*, and *calamities* and distresse disheartned us *within*, whether *then* we were not happy in a gracious King, who pittying our sad estate did give *Commission* to a real *Nehemiah*, whose *wisdom* and *vigilance*, whose *courage* and *conduct* preserved a very *small band* from *violence* and *ruine*, whether our *Pilot* did not generously engage in *our stormes* to keep us safe, neglecting his *private ease* for the *publick good*, and *charitably relieving* the naked and *poor*, when he had but *little left* to *maintain himself*.

2. When *Rapine* and *Confusion* encroached upon the *Office* as well as the *Patri-mony* of the *Church*, when the *chambers* of the *Sanctuary* were fill'd with *Tobiah* and his *followers*, when the *portions* of *Gods Altar* were shared betwixt *Sanballat* and his *crue*, whether *then* we were not *once more* (by the care of our present *Sovereign*) made happy with *his return*, under whose  
wing

*wing and protection we had been formerly preserved? whether he hath not upon all occasions both before and now encouraged religion, and respected the very persons as well as the function of the Clergy? Whether he did not refuse all proffers which were in the least inconsistent with his duty to God or his Prince, or the tranquillity of his Charge, whether I say upon all opportunities he hath not shewed himself a Nehemiah indeed?*

Lastly, if upon search we find *all this* and much more to be true, then, whether we of this place are not obliged 1. to thank God for his mercy, 2. to thank our Sovereign for his still continued care in sending such to cherish and protect us, 3. (to conclude all) whether it does not besit us that that request which Nehemiah in my Text put up for himself, may be our joynt Prayer for him, whose Government and Care we have had so kind an Experience of, viz. That God would remember both him and us for good, that he would

would spare them according to the multitude of his mercies, that he would not wipe out all the good deeds which he and they all have done for this whole Nation, for God's Church, and for the Offices thereof. Amen.



FINIS.

